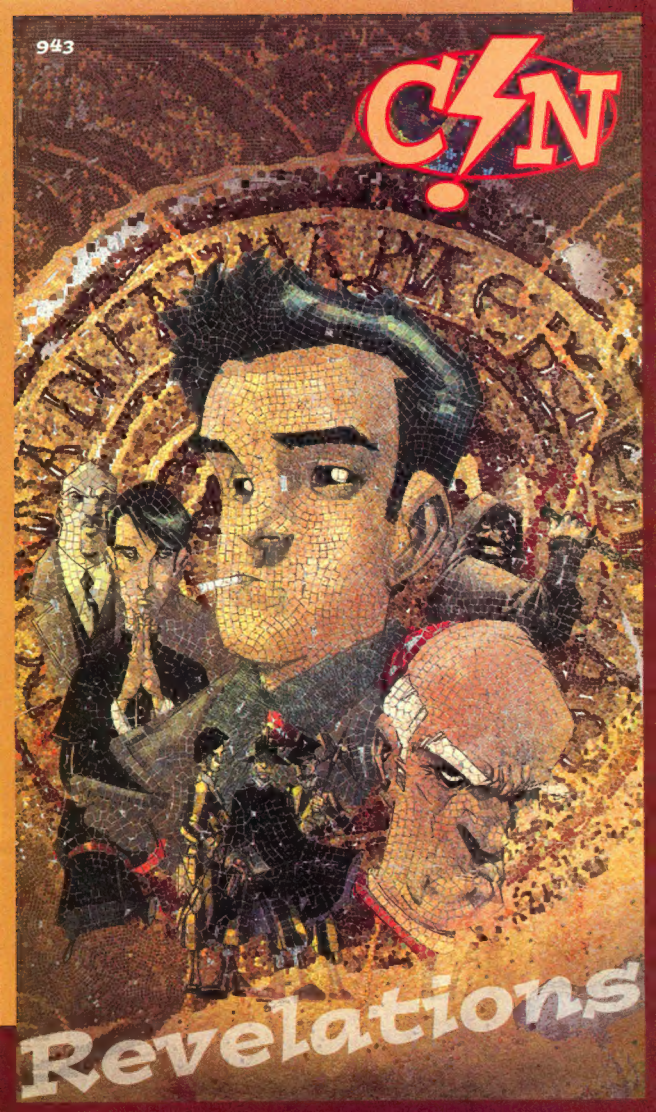
C!N
Revelations

Jenkins' Revelations

Later this summer, Dark Horse reunites the team responsible for those memorable issues of ***Spectacular Spider-Man***—but that's no revelation. What *is* a ***Revelation*** is the series that re-teams *Paul Jenkins & Humberto Ramos.*

At the core of ***Revelations,*** a six-issue limited series, is a murder mystery—but this is a mystery in a place with rules and traditions far different from anywhere else on earth: The Vatican, the seat of the Catholic Church. The victim is a a high-ranking Vatican official, whom many believed to be the logical successor to the Pope. While there is an investigation and the case is "settled," a young Cardinal feels that there is much more to the death, and seeks help from an old friend – Charlie Northern, a Scotland Yard detective with a penchant for conspiracies and global-scale mysteries. But even he is unprepared for what he discover.

"The origins of this story began during a conversation that Humberto and I had," Jenkins told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady.* "We started talking about what happens to people who are very devout in their religion when corruption begins to intrude... One thing led to another, and it was basically we developed an idea about a guy who's struggling to coming to terms with his lack of faith in a situation where faith may be the one thing that puts everything into perspective. We went after that idea, and then adapted to the sort of characters I really like—in particular, a London boy, an old detective with a penchant for swearing at his cigarettes every time he lights one up.

"Humberto and I were interested in what happens when someone with an analytical brain has to go in and investigate matters that revolve around faith, rather than politics. What happens when someone like that has to enter a world that's based on faith, such as the Vatican, to do his job that, so far, has been something he applied reason and logic to, and it got him by. That was the base idea—a detective has to go and investigate something that he's not very comfortable with."

The story may sound a bit predictable,b ut Jenkins promises that he'll be pitching a few curves. "You may think you know what's coming next, you don't. Every conclusion that Charlie comes to about what's actually happened in this death is not right—it's something else again. So, as he gets closer and closer to being able to figure out where it's all coming from, he can't do it. He'll get closer to the answer, and another answer will present itself.

"I didn't want to go for the obvious answers, which is, there's a conspiracy and all priests are child molesters. That's drives me nuts. When I came on board ***Hellblazer*** years ago, I found that so many ***Hellblazer*** stories had been written where Catholic priests were molesters and thoroughly corrupt and parts of an utterly corrupt system. I looked that that in this context, and I didn't want to do that. It's the easy way out. I don't like doing that any more. I don't want to fall into that trap where the answer is a Vatican conspiracy to cover up he sins of its own.

"So, the best way to be able to get away from that is that every time you think you know where things are heading, the story will take a swing far away from where you thought things were heading. I'm doing my damnedest to keep people guessing throughout, and for poor Charlie—when he finds out what actually is happening, his life will be changed completely. So, the story is not just a contemporary mystery that began when this priest was murdered, this mystery spans centuries and the world, take many turns and twists, and will keep everyone guessing. As Charlie gets deeper and deeper, the scope gets broader."

Making the story even more challenging is the setting—a place that few people have ever seen, and fewer have ever discussed. "When you set a story in the Vatican, you have to take some artistic license," Jenkins said. "You can research things up to a point, but you quickly reach a place where you just have to admit that you don't know exactly how things work from there on in. You can make some well-educated guesses, but the deeper you get into the Vatican, the smaller and smaller the number of people who actually know how things operate gets... I'm a research hound, so I really wanted to work out the mechanics of how the Vatican works, and what exact procedures would be followed if something like this did happen, but there was only so far I could go...."

"It's certainly delving into the nature of the way the Vatican works, but what I was more interested in digging into was looking at the question of what someone does when the answers that he thinks are really simple are much more complicated, and then even those answers are much more complicated than that? This is the kind of story that I've really wanted to do for a long, long time—it's so though-provoking and there are so many layers to it that hopefully, it will keep people guessing."

Revelations reunites Jenkins with artist *Humberto Ramos*—but Ramos' art looks very different here. "It's like a few scenes we did together in our issues of ***Spectacular Spider-Man*** – I know we did it in one of our Venom sequences where we delved into what the Venom creature was, and explored its alien nature," Jenkins said. "It's this style he brings in with crosshatching, just making the page absolutely beautiful. When we would run through kinds of pages in ***Spectacular***, people would always ask why Humberto couldn't do the entire issue like that—well, here you go. Once people see it, they'll see how he's redefined himself as an artist. It has portions of his style in it – you can see his tells, and elements that are clearly from him, but at the same time, it looks entirely different.

"It's funny; people polarize around Humberto, with little middle ground. I think this will be a bridge for people who've said that they don't like his art to look at him again. It's not the distended body type that Humberto would use that pushed his work toward caricature, it's something totally new and different that people will really enjoy, and adds a whole different flavor to the story. It's amazing. People will be blown away – the interiors look full painted, but they're not. It's hard to explain, but it's amazing."

Jenkins stresses that his goal here isn't Catholic-bashing. "My goal would be that, if a very staunch Catholic, who was very protective of the Catholic Church and its dogma read issue #2, they would say, 'Paul Jenkins should burn in Hell.' But the, if they read issue #3, they'd say, 'Pull Jenkins out, let's look at this again,' and by issue #4, maybe be back to, 'Look at what they're trying to say here – this is something interesting.' It would play with their emotions as much as it would the non-Catholic reader. The one thing I can say is that ***Revelations*** has absolutely nothing to do with attacking the Catholic Church. It's not even a commentary about the more negative aspects or scandals the Catholic Church has undergone lately—it's about the difficulty of one man going into an environment that's even bigger than the sum of its parts, which the Catholic Church is. When Charlie goes into it, he realizes that it's bigger than even he could have conceived.

"In the end, it's a story, where the murder of a Cardinal is only the start for one man's journey. It's not a story that people think they know, and it won't take them in the places they think they're going to go."

Revelations #1 is scheduled for August release.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

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Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Bruce Hamilton Passes

Disney fans lost a friend and fellow aficionado on June 18th when *Bruce Hamilton*, the publisher of Gladstone comics, died.

Today, readers are well aware of the genius of *Carl Barks*... but it was Hamilton (along with *Russ Cochran*) who helped to make the comics world aware of the Duck Man's amazing talents through books and fine art lithographs that highlighted Barks' work.

In the 1980's, after Western Publishing dropped its decades-old Disney license, Hamilton acquired the rights to continue the Disney comic book heritage with a new line of publications under the Gladstone imprint. After the license moved from Gladstone to Gemstone, he continued to offer support and advice to the Gemstone team, recognizing the importance of Disney's characters to comic book history.

Sam Loeb Passes

Sam Loeb, the son of writer *Jeph Loeb*, passed away in mid-June after a three-year battle with cancer. the seventeen-year-old was was a regular figure at conventions, accompanying his father at the DC booth and panels; Sam also had aspirations to follow his father into comics writing, and had actually made his writing debut in Dark Horse Comics' ***Tales of the Vampires #5***, contributing a six-page story that was illustrated by his father's frequent creative partner *Tim Sale*.

Ins & Outs

In: *Tom Raney*, who is replacing *Steve McNiven* as artist on ***Ultimate Secret #3*** when the issue finally appears in September. He and ***US*** writer *Warren Ellis* had previously worked on ***StormWatch***. "Warren and I really clicked on Stormwatch," Raney said.. "I've been looking forward to working with him again. I've also been enjoying ***Ultimate Secret*** and previously ***Ultimate Nightmare***. So, getting the chance to have these two converge is too cool for words!" Marvel hopes to finish the series this fall so that they can launch the third miniseries in the Ellis trilogy, ***Ultimate Extinction***, before the end of the year.

Publisher
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Editors
Cliff Biggers
Ward Batty

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Editorial Office
2770 Carillon Crossing
Marietta, GA 30066
fax (928) 441-5990
cliffbig@comicshopnews.com

Business Office
3577-A Chamblee-Tucker Rd. #215
Atlanta, GA 30341
(770) 939-1364
fax (678) 669-1525
wbatty@csnsider.com
http://www.csnsider.com

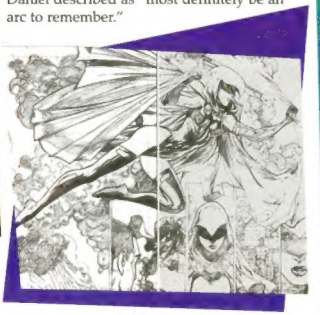
In: Artist *J.K. Woodward*, who has been tapped by *Peter David* and IDW Publishing to illustrate David's ***Fallen Angel*** series when it relaunches from IDW later this year. "The moment I saw Woodward's work I said, 'Yes! This is the guy!' And that was based on his previous work; once he did up the sample piece with the ***Fallen Angel*** on it, I knew we had the right man. I firmly believe that J.K. Woodward's style will provide exactly the air of mood and mystery that Bete Noire needs and IDW fans have come to expect."

Out: Events at DC have led to oodles of recent sellouts, including:

- ***Action Comics 827 & 828*** (first two issues by *Gail Simone & John Byrne*—no plans to reprint)
- ***Adventures of Superman #640*** (first issue by the new creative team of *Greg Rucka & Karl Kerschl*—no plans to reprint)
- ***Adventures of Superman #641*** (a ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis*** crossover—no plans to reprint)
- ***Batman #641*** (continuing the Red Hood story arc—no plans to reprint)
- ***Batman: Gotham Knights #66*** (a ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis*** crossover—no plans to reprint)
- ***Birds of Prey #83*** (a ***Countdown to Infinite Crisis*** crossover—no plans to reprint)
- ***Hawkman #41*** (a major transition issue with a crucial character death—no plans to reprint)
- ***OMAC Project #2*** (second printing in comic shops as you read this)
- ***Superman #s 217*** (first issue by the new creative team of *Mark Verheiden & Ed Benes*—no plans to reprint)
- ***Superman/Batman #20*** (the first installment of the Maximums arc by *Jeph Loeb, Ed McGuinness, & Dexter Vines*—no plans to reprint)
- ***Teen Titans #24*** (first part of the Titans-Outsiders crossover—no plans to reprint)
- ***Villains United #2*** (second printing coming in early July)

As the excitement leading up to this fall's ***Infinite Crisis*** continues to shake up the DCU, readers can anticipate more sellouts, in spite of strong DC overprintings. Ask the friendly folks at your local comic shop what you can do to ensure that you don't miss out on the biggest comics events of 2005!

In: *Tony Daniel* has signed on to supply more art for ***Teen Titans***. Daniel, who is illustrating ***Teen Titans #26***, will come back to illustrate *Geoff Johns'* story arc in ***Teen Titans #s 30-33***. No details on the storyline, but these issues will appear during the height of the ***Infinite Crisis*** period, so readers can expect major changes in the four-parter that Daniel described as "most definitely be an arc to remember."



In: ***2020 Visions***, the long-out-of-print *Jamie Delano* miniseries illustrated by *Frank Quitely, Steeve Pugh, Warren Pleece, & James Romberger* that originally appeared under the Vertigo print, is returning to print in a trade paperback edition from Speakeasy Comics.

In: ***Crisis on Infinite Earths***, the *Marv Wolfman* novel based on the historic maxiseries that he and *George Pérez* produced twenty years ago, is returning to print in a second edition after selling out just a few weeks after its initial release. The novel is far more than an adaptation of the comic; instead, it offers new insights and dozens of new scenes that expand on the original story. "I'm very proud of the book," Wolfman said. "If you read the original comic this will add much to the experience, but if you didn't, I think you'll still find this a page-turner. Previous ***Crisis*** experience is not necessary to understand the story or to enjoy it." Since the second printing will most likely be smaller than the first, readers might want to reserve a copy with their friendly local comic book retailer...

In: ***Chiaroscuro***, the thought-provoking maxiseries by *Dave Rawson, Pat McGreal, & Chas Truog* that focused on the life of Leonardo da Vinci, is coming back into print. Vertigo plans to issue a trade paperback of series in October.

In: ***The Perhapanauts***, *Todd Dezago & Craig Rousseau's* offbeat lighthearted humor-adventure saga of a team of paranormal enforcement agents, has found a home at Dark Horse Comics. Dezago told ***CSN*** that the first issue of an original ***Perhapanauts*** four-parter is scheduled to make its Dark Horse debut in October, and a second series is already in the works. The series was previously available online and in a small-distribution self-published comic.

Masters of the DC Universe

Readers are very familiar with Geoff Johns the writer; his work on series such as ***Flash, JSA***, and ***Green Lantern***—and in particular his work as writer of the upcoming ***Infinite Crisis***—has been a major factor in reshaping the DC Universe.

And now Johns is taking on an even *larger* role in reshaping the DC Universe.

Though neither the writer nor DC have given Johns an official title, the writer has entered into an editorial/consulting agreement with DC through ***Crisis***, which means that Johns is taking a more active role in helping to shepherd the characters of the DCU into the coming ***Crisis*** and to guide them out seven months later.

"The idea of working on ***Infinite Crisis***, and being able to craft such a complex maxiseries for us was daunting at best," DC's *Dan DiDio* said. "Geoff was spending a lot of time tracking the four miniseries, following the characters, and seeing how they were all coming into it.

"But more importantly, because we wanted to make sure that ***Infinite Crisis*** clearly established a lot of jump-on points for new series and new characters, Geoff was also very closely involved with seeing what we'd be doing with the characters following ***Crisis***, and where they'd need to be by the end. So, he was reading a lot of material prior to things, and was responsible for a lot of the material that would be coming out of it as well.

"Geoff, being Geoff, was more than willing to do this on his own time—but from my standpoint, I felt that we wanted to do the right and fair thing, so I wanted to craft an agreement that we could compensate him for the time and energy he was putting in to reading the new material and offering suggestions on the best way to come in and out of ***Crisis***.

"For me, it allowed us to have someone who was following everything that was going on in the DC Universe in the sense of the overview and how the pieces were fitting together, and making sure we didn't have any redundancies in stories or any duplication of ideas.

"When you have so many characters and so many things trying to happen at the same time, your biggest fear is that all your creators will come up with the same idea at the same time, which would rob it of its uniqueness. This is one way that we can work and coordinate things so that each character and each story and each series will have its own level of individuality and a lot of that individuality and personality of the series will be coming out of ***Crisis***."

For Johns, it's like a dream come true: he gets paid to talk with talented people about comic books! "The best thing about comic books is that I love working with people – I love talking with other creators and the editors at DC about what they want to do and what they've got planned, and *Dan DiDio* has been an incredible leader" Johns said.

"So I've been talking to everyone—*Bill Willingham, Dave Gibbons, Gail Simone, Darwyn Cooke, Allan Heinberg, Judd Winick, Keith Giffen* (yeah, wait until you see what he's got planned), *Jeph Loeb, Mark Verheiden, Stuart Moore, Justin Gray, Jimmy Palmiotti, Will Pfeifer, Marc Andreyko* and so many more—all these great, talented writers that are in the DCU right now.

"And the editorial staff of the DCU like *Eddie Berganza, Peter Tomasi, Steve Wacker, Joan Hilty, Matt Idelson, Joey Cavalieri, Mike Carlin, Nachie Castro*, and the rest—I get to pick their brains and talk to them about what they want to do and what they have planned. I also get to work with a bunch of other writers who are involved with stuff after ***Crisis*** as well, there's some brilliant ideas from *Grant Morrison* and another writer who'll be doing a major book in the DCU that'll be unreal... but no one can really talk about them yet.

"In doing this, I'm able to get a feeling for all these books and what they have coming after ***Crisis*** and see where every book is going to be in order to make ***Crisis*** an event where things that happen actually affect the characters and get them to a place where the creators want them.

"I also have to single out *Greg Rucka*, who's just been an unreal partner through all of this, and is shouldering a huge part of the work on going into and coming out of ***Crisis***; he's been a great support in all of this. He and I have had a few New York work-weeks, and his work and input have just been integral to ***Crisis***, both in the lead-up and coming out of it.

"I guess, in the end, this is all just an expansion of what I am doing with ***Crisis***. I really need to know what everyone wants to do and where everyone is going in order to make ***Crisis*** an event that matters. It's a pretty massive undertaking and we've got one shot and we have to do this together."

As DiDio explained, Johns isn't playing 'continuity cop,' but he *is* detail-oriented, tracking the series and characters leading up to ***Crisis*** to enable him to ultimately give ***Infinite Crisis*** a much more organic feel. "From my vantage point, it's another set of eyes to help wrangle this beast that we're trying to control."

Johns takes the job very seriously, as is evidenced by the extra time he's putting into coordination and scripting. "It's taking me at

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Dusting Off

Apparently you can't keep a good woman down... particularly when she carries a pair of deadly six-shooters who's also the fastest draw alive!

Dusty Star, the short-lived series by *Joe Pruett & Andrew Robinson* that began in the Pruett-edited ***Negative Burn*** back in its Caliber Comics days and then moved to Image for two issues (one reprinting the ***Negative Burn*** tales and a second orginal issue) before going on hiatus, is back on the schedule at Desperado Publishing and Image, with both creators returning to tell Dusty's cyber-western saga.

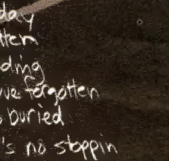
As Pruett tells it, the adventure is set in a realm of "burlesque shows and all-night poker games, robots and flying ships, tattooed horses and new-wave cowboys, and cowgirls with bad attitudes. This is the world of Dusty Star, a tough-as-nails gunslinger with a steely-eyed gaze and a quick-draw as fast as greased lighting!" Pruett describes the series as "a mix of different genres—western, science-fiction, adventure, humor.

"In a nutshell, Dusty Star is a tough-talkin' cowgirl with a bad attitude. Don't mess with her unless you want to get put in your place. The world Dusty inhabits is unlike any other western project out there. There are ghost towns, robot gangs, horses with tattoos, flying machines, giant desert monsters, and no rules. It ain't your grandpappy's western, that's for sure!"

Dusty Star #1, scheduled for August release, feaetures a full-color original story. "We'll probably reprint the original #1 in our second issue—this time in color—but add more pages to it to fill the issue out.," Pruett said. "Everything else will be brand new!"

And for those who'd like a glimpse into Dusty's world, ***CSN*** spotlights the series in this issue's ***CSN Debut.***

a Star



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least—not counting the plotting and the phone calls—at least a month to write a script," Johns said. "I have to go slowly and carefully. For example, if Vril Dox appears in ***Adam Strange*** and ***Rann-Thanagar War***, and has a certain persona and a new M.O. in those appearances, I've got to be aware of that, and talk to Dave Gibbons and see if he has plans for Vril Dox in his next book, what he's going to do, what L.E.G.I.O.N.'s new role is going to be, etc. I need to know everything even if he's only got three lines. They can't just appear randomly."

"Geoff is helping me to coordinate the overview and scope, and then I'm working with the editors, and the editors are working the details with the writers and artists," DiDio explained. "It really doesn't break the structure of how we do business; it's just another voice, and another place that I can turn to for help. Geoff being here in this capacity is to allow me to do my job better."

"The main motivation for this is to make ***Crisis*** as important to the DC Universe as possible, while making it as big as possible and as consistent as possible," Johns said. "It's not all about continuity as much as it is about consistency – we want the characters across the DCU to act in a consistent manner.

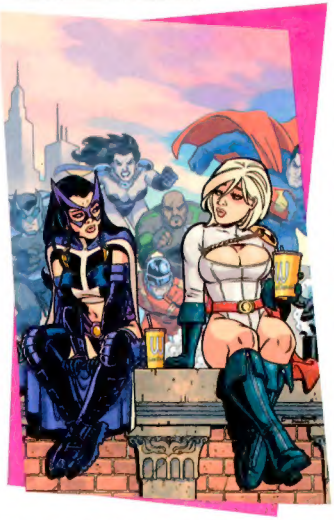
"And while I've been talking most about working with Dan and the other creators, I do have to mention that [DC President and Publisher] *Paul Levitz* has been integral in all of this as well, and has such an incredible understanding of what the DCU is. He's a guy who brings amazing ideas to the table as well. He loves these characters as much as anybody else, and is giving us a lot of direction as we move along."

And what's the end result of all this? "It means that ***Crisis*** is going to be a better story for it," Johns said. "It will be an event that will actually track with *all* of the characters and actually mean something. And the, with 'One Year Later…' coming right out of ***Crisis***, it will give all of us an opportunity to implement our own ideas and new directions.

"Yeah, everything is kind of tied together headed into ***Crisis***—but afterwards, I truly think 2006 is going to be the best year DC's had creatively in a long, long time. At the end of the day though, ***Crisis*** will be the result of working with every single writer and editor in the DCU and sharing the passion for these heroes and villains who are, in my opinion, the greatest characters in comics." And as it turns out, Johns isn't the only writer who'll also be lending his talents to DC as a consultant. *Grant Morrison*, the mastermind of the massive seven-miniseries thirty-part ***Seven Soldiers*** event, will also be working with DC in a consultation role.

"Grant was working on ***Seven Soldiers***, and once he got started, the ideas were just overflowing—not just ideas about characters for that project, but revived characters, concepts, and takes on how they could fit into the DC Universe," DiDio said. "He was throwing them at me a mile a minute. He got ***Seven Soldiers*** on paper, but he had so many other ideas, and every one was better than the one before it."

The ideas were just too good to waste, DiDio explained, and he figured that he should just put Morrison to work in the DCU in a consulting/development relationship. While Johns is working to shepherd characters and situations into and out of ***Infinite Crisis*** more smoothly, Morrison is looking at the post-***Crisis*** DC Universe, helping to populate it—or more accurately, *re*-populate—it with some revitalized characters and concepts. Some will be written by Morrison, while others will be moved to other creators for execution.



"When I was first pitching Seven Soldiers to Dan in 2003, I brought along several of my infamous black notebooks to help illustrate the 70 page proposal," Morrison explained. "I have about twelve of these books, filled with character redesigns and series ideas for everyone from the Atom to Zatanna, by way of the Marvel Universe, Wildstorm, and everyone else. I even have new takes on franchises like Predator (from when I was writing the ***Predator: Concrete Jungle*** X-Box game), Doctor Who, and James Bond, God help me.

"Testing me at random, Dan asked me if I had anything on the Quality comics characters now known as the Freedom Fighters, only to find I had a lengthy series proposal with sketches. At that point, I think he decided I was too good a resource to waste.

"Recreating properties is something I do between jobs for my own amusement and to exercise my head, but Dan was clearly intrigued by the wealth of material and asked me if I'd like to accept a job as DC's official 'revamp guy.'"

Both DiDio and Morrison stressed that the writer isn't pulling books or concepts out from under creators and handing them back a radically altered concept that they have to shoehorn into their existing plans. Instead, Morrison is looking through DC's catalog of characters and concepts that haven't seen the light of day for a while, and "re-imagining" them for a modern audience. Rather than working with the *known* of the DCU, Morrison is looking to bring back the *unknown* to today's fans—or at the very least, the largely forgotten and lost to time.

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"It's fresh takes on old characters and concepts that we're trying to dust off and bring new life to," DiDio said. "For the life of me, if someone would have said they were going to do a miniseries on Klarion the Witch Boy five years ago, I think he would have been laughed out of the room. However, the fact that Grant came up with Klarion, made it part of a great larger story, and found a way to make it successful is a testament to his strengths and ideas as a writer. It's as I've always said, Grant could write a series about a glass of water, and it would be interesting."

While neither DiDio nor Morrison would offer details on titles and characters that he's developing for early 2006, the writer did open the door to his thought processes a little. "There are two *groups* of DC characters that I'm working with really: the ones Dan brings to me and favorites of my own that I'd like to see returned to prominence , like the Knight and Squire—who appeared in *JLA: Classified* and will turn up again shortly—Super-Chief, Marvel Maid or Doll Man ..

"On the other side of things, Dan tends to come up with stuff I'd never have thought of doing, which is always fun and a challenge. Between us, we've come up with quite an extensive list of half-forgotten DC characters who deserve a new lease of life.

"My job is to take gawky, ugly ducklings or faded blooms and turn them into superstars basically. In a way, I'm doing what *Julie Schwartz* did back in the mid-50s, when he and his writers took a bunch of old names from the files and created fresh new heroes for a new audience.

"I take a character, read up on him/her and then try to figure out how to make the character work in today's market, while still retaining all the special qualities that make the property distinctive and unique. I try to figure out what the original creator was trying to say and then I find a more contemporary way to convey the same themes. Areas that are conceptually weak, I strengthen, things that don't work, I cut out, things that do, I emphasize.

"Some of the overhauls are nip/tuck jobs; some are radical makeovers involving intensive but sensitive plastic surgery, starting from scratch with very different origin stories, secret identities or set-ups. I'll be working with *Geoff Johns*, however, to ensure that all of the new books are tied neatly into DC continuity—particularly since most of these characters will play pivotal roles in the wild, rich, and scary post-*Crisis* universe we're all building towards at the moment."

As for the "how" aspect of it all, Morrison explained that he writes a series bible for each character that is roughly ten pages in length – longer if it's a team book. "The bible outlines in detail my new take on the concept, provides origin details and character studies for the hero, his villains and his supporting cast and also has full plot and story synopses for about six issues worth of material as well as suggestions for future development of the property," Morrison said. "I also provide full color sketches and design material to go with each character. The documents are pretty thorough and are intended to provide strong springboards for new launches."

According to DiDio, a couple of Morrison's revitalized concepts are currently in full development phase, prepping for an early 2006 rollout, i.e., joining the "One Year Later…" timing of the rest of the DCU after *Crisis*. And these projects will be clearly set in the DCU.

"The characters I've done so far are all very different and come from different areas of the DCU," Morrison said, "so I've been moving from shiny sci-fi to bloody crime, from generational soap opera to robot action with little heed to commonality of theme or purpose. I don't like to stick to one genre and this gives me a chance to mix it up a little. The only thing I'm consciously trying to do with all of these recreations is to widen the ethnic spread of DC's characters...

"The newly-sentient DC Universe looks mighty unstoppable for the next couple of years!" Morrison concluded enthusiastically.

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